

2019 Federal Election

BRIEFING POINTS FOR KENNEDY CANDIDATES

Natural Resource Management

- Natural Resource Management (NRM) supports natural resource-based industries and communities to achieve a prosperous future while maintaining and protecting the productive and environmental values of our land and water resources.
- Southern Gulf NRM, a not for profit, member-owned and community-led organisation, works with the beef industry and other land managers to build knowledge and skills for sustainable grazing land management and supports management practice change with grants and technical advice.

Community-led Natural Resource Management has a vital role in the Southern Gulf region.

National Landcare Program

- Most of the Australian Government investment into NRM is through the National Landcare Program.
- The current government has established a second round NLP program to apply from 2019 to 2023. National annual funding for the new program is 20% smaller than its predecessor.
- The new program forced not for profit NRM organisations throughout Australia to secure funding for their regional communities through a competitive tender process. This process created unreasonable risk and uncertainty, especially for small organisations like Southern Gulf NRM, and disrespected the role community-led NRM organisations have in identifying and addressing key regional priorities.

The Southern Gulf regional community depends on a national NRM investment model that respects the roles of community NRM organisations like Southern Gulf NRM as a partner to the Australian Government in achieving national NRM goals.

Southern Gulf Flooding Response

- The 2019 flooding in the Southern Gulf region has had a disastrous impact on the beef industry and the wider regional community and on the regional landscape.
- The emergency response has been swift and effective, reflecting well on regional, state and national leadership.
- Recovery will take many years. A community-led NRM approach that supports beef producers and other land managers to recover and become more resilient to floods and other disasters must be a vital component of a regional recovery program.
- Southern Gulf NRM has developed an NRM-based flood recovery strategy and is seeking support from the Australian and Queensland Governments for implementation resources.

Properly funded NRM projects must be included as a component of a coordinated regional flood recovery program.

Drought

- Leaders in the Southern Gulf beef industry understand that climate variability is a fact of life in our region. The extent to which drought is a natural disaster is a function of the preparedness and resilience of grazing enterprises.
- Building and applying knowledge, skills and management practices that build drought resilience is a key theme for NRM in the Southern Gulf region.
- Regional NRM programs addressing drought resilience must operate in the context of national and state drought policies.

Southern Gulf producers need the support of a coordinated national drought policy that supports both producer resilience and sustainable land management outcomes.

Climate Change

- Already exposed to floods, drought, bushfire, sea level change and temperature extremes, Southern Gulf producers and the landscape are highly vulnerable to a changing climate.
- The Southern Gulf beef industry has a role to play in emissions mitigation and must implement measures to adapt to climate change but so far activity is low, reflecting uncertainty and risk at the enterprise level.

Southern Gulf producers need more information, advice and encouragement if they are to contribute to, and benefit from climate mitigation policies.

Prickly Acacia Invasion

- Prickly Acacia and other woody weeds are a major threat to livelihoods, productivity and the environment in the Southern Gulf region.
- Controlling the extent and spread of infestations goes beyond the capacity of many beef producers. There is a clear market failure, but regulatory controls are ineffective and likely inappropriate.
- Prickly Acacia is a Weed of National Significance, yet investment into practical management of the weed by the Australian Government is now negligible and provided only sporadically.

Our regional community needs a comprehensive and consistently funded Prickly Acacia management program that has the objective of eliminating the economic and environmental threat of this damaging weed.

Irrigation and Farming

- The development of irrigated agriculture based on the water resources of the Flinders River system (and its tributaries) is an exciting economic development prospect for the region that will supplement the dominant broad-acre grazing industry.
- The economic and environmental sustainability of these proposals depends on good choices about water use, irrigation systems, soils and agronomy.

Public investment into irrigation development in the region must be based on good science and supported with modern extension programs aimed at ensuring best management practices and sustainable outcomes.

Environmental Values

- The Southern Gulf region supports nationally significant populations of native species such as the endangered Carpentarian Grasswren, Freshwater Sawfish and Eastern Curlew; and the coastal wetland system of the Southern Gulf is the largest and most intact of its type in Australia.
- Active conservation programs, often integrated with grazing land management, are important to sustain these values. Projects can provide opportunities to engage the region's Aboriginal communities in valuable and meaningful work in support of wider community outcomes.

Our region needs properly-funded environmental conservation projects that engage the regional grazing and Aboriginal communities, and which maintain and enhance critically important environmental and cultural values.

More Information

- **Personal Briefings:** All candidates are invited to contact Southern Gulf NRM for a personal briefing about the critical importance of NRM for our regional community.
- For more information about Southern Gulf NRM, go to our [website](#).
- Like our [Facebook page](#) for regular updates on our work and issues.
- Our Regional Catchment Strategy guides our work: [Southern Gulf Regional NRM Plan](#)
- **Contact:** Andrew Maclean, CEO, 0417 052 495 | Megan Munchenberg, Chairperson, 0429 433 773